

Northwestern University

HENRY AND LEIGH
BIENEN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Northwestern University Symphonic Band
Shawn D. Vondran, *conductor*
Imran Amarshi, *doctoral assistant conductor*
Rachel Stiles, *graduate assistant conductor*

PICK-STAIGER CONCERT HALL
2024–25 SEASON

Northwestern University Symphonic Band

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FRIDAY, MAY 9, 2025, AT 7:30 P.M.

Canzon Quarti Toni à 15 (1597)

Giovanni Gabrieli

(1557–1662)

ed. Eric Crees

Imran Amarshi, *doctoral assistant conductor*

**Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor,
BWV 582 (1706–1713/1975)**

Johann Sebastian Bach

(1685–1750)

trans. Donald Hunsberger

Enigma (2024)

David Biedenbender

INTERMISSION

Old Wine in New Bottles (1958)

IV. *Early One Morning*

Gordon Jacob

(1895–1984)

Rachel Stiles, *graduate assistant conductor*

Symphony for Band, No. 6, Op. 69 (1956)

Adagio–Allegro

Adagio sostenuto

Allegretto

Vivace

Vincent Persichetti

(1915–1987)

PROFILE

Shawn D. Vondran is in his eleventh year as the Associate Director of Bands at Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music. His responsibilities include conducting the Symphonic Band along with teaching courses in conducting, wind repertoire, orchestral repertoire, and other courses in the music performance and education curricula. During his tenure at Northwestern, the Symphonic Band was selected to perform at the 2020 College Band Directors National Association (CBDNA) North Central Division Conference. The ensemble frequently engages with a number of composers and participates in consortia to support the creation and performance of new music for the wind band medium.

Dr. Vondran served on the faculties at Ball State University, Western Illinois University, and Youngstown State University prior to his appointment at Northwestern University. He began his career as a band director at Mentor High School in Ohio, where his ensembles consistently received accolades for their performances.

Recently, Vondran was elected by his peers to the prestigious American Bandmasters Association. He also received the College of Fine Arts Dean's Teaching Award while at Ball State University for excellence in teaching and dedication to his students. Additionally, the Ball State University Symphony Band was selected to perform at the 2012 and 2014 Indiana Music Education Association Conference during his tenure.

Vondran maintains an active schedule with engagements throughout the United States as a guest conductor, clinician, and adjudicator. In addition to performance engagements, he is an on-going contributor to the *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band* series published by GIA and appeared in the *National Band Association Journal*. He has also presented a clinic at the Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic. Dr. Vondran has worked with a number of composers in the preparation, performance, and/or recording of their works for the wind band medium. These artistic collaborations include John Corigliano, Christopher Rouse, David Maslanka, Michael Daugherty, Steven Bryant, Joel Puckett, and Jennifer Higdon. He is a member of the College Band Directors National Association, where he serves as the Illinois state chair, and Pi Kappa Lambda.

Vondran received his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in instrumental conducting, with an emphasis in music education, from the University of Miami (FL). Vondran completed a Master of Music degree in instrumental conducting at Youngstown State University and earned a Bachelor of Music Education degree (magna cum laude) at The Ohio State University.

PROGRAM NOTES

Canzon Quarti Toni à 15

Gabrieli

Giovanni Gabrieli was a Venetian composer and organist whose music bridged the gap between the late Renaissance and Baroque eras of music. Although declining in its international political authority, Venice was a bustling capital for music and art in the late Renaissance. St. Mark's became the center of musical life in Venice, where secular and sacred music tended to blend together. Giovanni Gabrieli followed his uncle, Andrea Gabrieli, as the organist of St. Mark's in 1586 and kept the position until his death. It was there that he wrote many of his best and most influential works. St. Mark's Basilica is known for its grandeur; its richness and decoration were unparalleled in its time. This opulence, combined with the large space in the footprint of a cross, demanded music of the same magnificence to be performed inside.

The most lavish instrumental canzona from his 1597 collection, *Canzon Quarti Toni à 15* is scored for three five-part choirs. The music achieves its rich sonority by employing voices primarily in the alto to bass registers. Each choir introduces its own solemn musical material before combining in a surprising major sonority. Gabrieli's trademark musical style is prevalent through the antiphonal dialogue between choirs, the use of a contrasting triple meter section, and the work's lush and majestic conclusion.

Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor, BWV 582

J.S. Bach

Johann Sebastian Bach was born in 1685 in Eisenach, Germany, where he received his initial musical training from his father. During his early adulthood, he studied the organ and earned a succession of church organist posts in eastern Germany, including at Arnstadt and Weimar. In 1723, Bach became the choirmaster at both St. Nicholas and St. Thomas Churches in Leipzig, where he would spend the remainder of his life. A highly prolific composer with over 1,000 works to his credit, Bach is well known for his organ compositions, the development of the fugue, and his role as the father of tonal harmony.

Unlike Bach's vocal, chamber, and orchestral works, his keyboard compositions date from throughout his career. The Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor was originally composed for cembalo during Bach's second residency in Weimar and was later transcribed for organ. The passacaglia theme and the fugue consist of two parts: the first, borrowed from the *Trio en Passacaille* by Andre Raison, and the second consisting of original musical material. The passacaglia is presented followed by twenty variations, each closing with an authentic cadence. Despite brief attempts at finality there remains a flow of continuity provided by a frequent rhythmic acceleration during the closing measures of the variation, anticipating the rhythmic pattern of the following variation. An additional feeling of continuity is supplied through the contrapuntal treatment of the inner voices, seldom allowing these voices to become stagnant. The fugue utilizes the first half of the passacaglia theme as its subject, which is presented twelve times, alongside a countersubject.

In scoring the work for winds, Hunsberger has chosen an instrumentation that uses the ensemble's complete range. This brilliant orchestration fully explores the expressive potential of the wind ensemble.

Enigma

Biedenbender

David Biedenbender's music has been described by critics as "simply beautiful," "striking," and "brilliantly crafted." His catalog includes works for the concert stage as well as for dance and multimedia collaborations. His creative interests include working with classically trained musicians and improvisers, chamber and large ensembles, interactive electronic interfaces, and live brain data. He is a Associate Professor and Chair of Composition at Michigan State University and holds degrees in composition from the University of Michigan and Central Michigan University.

Winner of the 2024 National Band Association William D. Revelli Prize, *Enigma* was originally written for brass and organ for the dedication of the Red Cedar Organ in the Michigan State University Alumni Chapel. The composer provides the following note on the work:

Enigma comes from a Greek word that means "to speak in riddles," and in this piece, the riddle—or theme—is revealed gradually. The theme comes from the Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor by Johann Sebastian Bach, which is one of my favorite pieces of music, and, once the theme is revealed, it is repeated cyclically with 21 variations, just like in

Bach's original. This piece is dedicated to my former teacher, José-Luis Maúrtua, a composer, theorist, conductor, and teacher with whom I studied at Central Michigan University. José-Luis was an extraordinary musician and teacher who was tirelessly dedicated to his students and to pushing them to do their best. I am forever grateful for the lessons I learned from him, and my music and my life are far better for having known him. Unfortunately, he was taken from this earth far too young—at the age of 57—by pancreatic cancer in the spring of 2022. I miss him dearly, and this music is for him.

Old Wine in New Bottles

Jacob

Gordon Jacob was born on July 5th, 1895, in Upper Norwood near London. Jacob studied piano in his youth, and his interest in music was encouraged by his older siblings. After World War 1, Jacob was awarded a grant to study at the Royal College of Music. His composition teachers included Charles Villiers Stanford, Ralph Vaughan Williams, and Herbert Howells. When Jacob graduated from the Royal College of Music, he was immediately hired as a member of the faculty in 1926. He taught composition and orchestration. Many of his pupils became well-known composers, including Malcolm Arnold, Imogen Holst, Joseph Horowitz, Elizabeth Maconchy, and Bernard Stevens. Throughout his tenure at the Royal College of Music, Jacob earned many awards and honors. He authored several music texts, including *How to Read a Score*, *The Composer and His Art*, and *The Elements of Orchestration*. Before his death on June 8th, 1984, Jacob composed over 700 pieces of music, making him one of England's most prolific composers. Jacob wrote several works for band, chamber winds, and brass band, including *An Original Suite*, *William Byrd Suite*, and *Music for a Festival*.

Gordon Jacob composed *Old Wine in New Bottles* for the St. Bees Festival of Music. The title of this suite alludes to a common metaphor in which something well-known is presented in a new way. This original work and its sequel (*More Old Wine in New Bottles*) are a reflection of Jacob's refined compositional style, which emphasizes unique textures, clear formal structures, and recognizable folk melodies. Each movement is based on an old English folk song and the free modern treatment of the familiar tunes gives rise to its title. Jacob is generally regarded as a conservative composer who favors clear, large scale formal structures, such as theme and variations, melodies often borrowed from preexisting tunes, and traditional extended tertian harmonies. The instrumentation is that of a double woodwind quintet.

Symphony for Band, No. 6, Op. 69

Persichetti

Vincent Persichetti was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1915, the city in which he lived most of his life and where he died in 1987. He began studying music at age five, and by age eleven he was paying for his own musical education through his work as an organist and accompanist. He served on the faculties of Combs College of Music in Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Conservatory, and The Juilliard School of Music in New York City, where he was also appointed Chairman of the Composition Department in 1963.

Symphony for Band was commissioned and premiered by Clark Mitze and the Washington University Band at the Music Educators National Conference in St. Louis on April 16, 1956. According to the composer, it could have been titled Symphony for Winds, following his Symphony No. 5 for Strings. Persichetti, however, did not wish to avoid the word “band,” which he felt no longer had a negative connotation. In the Journal of Band Research, he wrote, “Band music is virtually the only kind of music in America today (outside of the ‘pop’ field) which can be introduced, accepted, put to immediate and wide use, and become a staple of the literature in a short time.” According to Jeffrey Renshaw, “The Symphony for Band ... was in many ways such a departure from the established concepts of band works that it influenced the attitudes of generations of composers.”

Written in a neoclassical style, the four movements of this symphony have formal structures with traditional implications. The opening horn call and a following scalar passage in the slow introduction become the two principal themes in the subsequent sonata-form Allegro. The slow second movement is based on the hymn *Round Me Falls the Night*, from the composer’s *Hymns and Responses for the Church Year*. The third movement, in trio form, serves as the traditional dance movement and is followed by a finale in free rondo form, which draws thematic material from the preceding movements and concludes with a chord containing all 12 tones within an octave. Persichetti’s innovative percussion writing is prevalent throughout the work, utilizing both pitched and non-pitched instruments.

SYMPHONIC BAND

Dr. Shawn Vondran, *conductor*

Imran Amarshi, *doctoral assistant conductor*

Rachel Stiles, *graduate assistant conductor*

Flute/Piccolo

Wiktoria Godawa
Emily Kim
Riona Kim
Katelyn Lee
Joshua Rascon

Oboe/English Horn

Jordan Boymel
Emerald Lewis
Ansel Pierson

Clarinet

Jose Aguilar
Josie InTham
Casey Li
Chengze Li
Minghao Liu
Peter Platosh
Leo Shen
Nathan Soto

Bassoon

Arthur Hu
Ethan Weingust
Bowie Wu

Saxophone

Seth Alexander
Aryan Avadhanam
Hari Maheswaran
Audrey Zhou

Trumpet

Isaac Brown
Rachael McKay
Tehya Shapiro
Lilie Shlyak
Jonathan Taylor
Sam VanLoo

Horn

Caiden Follmer
Michael James
Elizabeth Smith
Molly Sullivan
Tristan Wittmer

Trombone

Madi Bayaca
Tim George
Harry Guan
Dylan Halliday
Hayden Lovinfosse
Liam Melvin
Lola Stevenson

Euphonium

Brandon Baade
Will Claudius
Rohan Venkatesan

Tuba

Nolan Fallon
Luke Interrante
Avery Li

Percussion

Isaac Chiang
Hila Kuperman
Ellie Lebovich
Mark Li
Blake Parker
Kyle Yuen

Piano

Isaiah Adams

Double Bass

Abhi Vinnakota

BAND PROGRAM

Director of Bands

Robert Taylor

John W. Beattie Chair of Music

Associate Director of Bands

Shawn Vondran

Director of Athletic Bands

Daniel Farris

Department Assistant

Maggie Whiteman

Doctoral Assistants

Imran Amarshi, Sheldon Frazier

Graduate Assistants

Rachel Stiles, Michael Witt

Stage Managers

Troy Archer, Stewart Bridgeforth,

Chris Carrigg, Arlo Hollander,

Zachary Hommel, Raúl Orellana, Sarah Perry

Ensemble Librarians

Maggie Umanetz-Lertprasopsak, Kevin Acuña

Equipment Managers

Brian Kachur, Micah Northam

AV Manager & Outreach Coordinator

Oliver Stark

CONCERT MANAGEMENT OFFICE STAFF

Director of Concert Management	Jerry Tietz
Concert Operations Manager	Kait Samuels
Ticketing Manager	Maxwell A. Johnson
Marketing Manager	Laura Nielsen
Marketing Coordinator	Elizabeth Avery
Technical Services Manager	Bill Milgram
Technical Services Manager	Zachary Lovitch
Concert Business Manager	Meg Lindsey
Supporting Staff	150 Northwestern Students
Dean, Bienen School of Music	Jonathan Bailey Holland

KEYBOARD MAINTENANCE

Supervisor of Keyboard Maintenance	Wesley Owen
Piano Technician	Chris Scroggins

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

- Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of the house manager. In consideration of the artists and other members of the audience, patrons who must leave before the end of the concert are asked to do so between pieces.
- Photography and audio/video recording of performances is strictly prohibited without prior written consent of the Concert Management Office.
- A limited number of assisted listening devices are available for the hearing impaired. Inquire at the box office.
- Smoking is prohibited by law in all Bienen School of Music performance venues.
- Every patron who will be occupying a seat must have a ticket in order to be admitted into the concert.
- The presenter reserves the right to ask any patron who is disrupting the event in any way to leave the concert hall.
- In the event of a medical emergency, please notify the nearest usher.
- When joining us for upcoming concerts, please leave the Concert Management Office phone number (847-491-5441) with anyone who might need to reach you in case of emergency.